

Department of Planning and Budget 2012 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB224-H1

House of Origin	<input type="checkbox"/> Introduced	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Engrossed
Second House	<input type="checkbox"/> In Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled

2. Patron: Habib

3. Committee: Appropriations

4. Title: Standards of Learning; Board of Education to adopt regulations allowing students to retake.

5. Summary: Requires the Board of Education to adopt regulations providing for an additional testing period prior to March 1 of each year for Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments. Any costs associated with the administration of SOL assessments during the additional testing period shall be borne by the participating school division.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: No.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Preliminary. See item 8.

8. Fiscal Implications: This legislation requires the Board of Education to adopt regulations providing for an additional testing period prior to March 1 of each year to administer SOL assessments. Local school boards would have the option to participate in the additional testing period. Any student who does not achieve a passing score during the additional testing period will be permitted to retake the test during another testing period. The substitute version of this bill would require participating school divisions to cover the full cost of the additional testing period.

Existing regulations permit any student who needs a passing score on an SOL test in order to graduate to retake an SOL test if the student meets the following criteria: (1) failed the test by a narrow margin; or (2) failed the test by any margin and has extenuating circumstances that would warrant retesting; or (3) did not sit for the regularly scheduled test for legitimate reasons.

The existing policy was put in place to allow students who need to pass an SOL test to meet graduation requirements to immediately retake the test if they failed it by a narrow margin or had extenuating circumstances that may have affected the score. This bill would expand the current eligibility requirements to retake SOL tests by providing an additional testing period available to all students subject to SOL testing, not just high school students that need a passing score to graduate. Based on the actual failure rates for history in 2011 and assuming a failure rate of 50 percent for the new mathematics, reading, writing, and science tests, it is

estimated that it would cost an additional \$1.1 million per year to cover the costs of retaking the SOL assessments. For this estimate, the Department of Education assumes that the fall administration period, which currently lasts until late February, would be extended until March 1 each year. In addition, the tests for grades 3, 4, and 5 reading and mathematics, grades 3 and 5 science, grade 5 writing, and Virginia Studies would have to be added to the fall administration period because they are currently not offered during that period. The testing provider for the state estimates that it would cost an additional \$1,023,000 each year to expand the fall administration period to March 1 and add the additional SOL tests.

The substitute version of this bill states that participating school divisions would be responsible for any costs associated with the administration of SOL assessments during the additional testing period. Based on the estimates provided above, those costs could total more than \$2.1 million each year. This could create an equity issue for students in less affluent divisions because the local school boards may decide not to participate in the additional testing period because they cannot afford the cost, thereby preventing the students in those divisions from having the opportunity to retake the SOL assessments.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Board of Education and local school divisions.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: None.

Date: 1/20/12

Document: H:\EDUCATION\K-12\General Assembly\2012\FIS for Introduced Bills

c: Emily Webb